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HUMAN RIGHTS QUESTIONS

Letter dated 12 April 1995 from the Permanent Representative of Estonia to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

I have the honour to bring to your attention the text of a statement issued on 26 March 1995 by the Foreign Ministry of Estonia regarding the rights of aliens in Estonia (see annex).

I should be grateful if you would have the text of the present letter and the attached statement circulated as an official document of the General Assembly under item 114 of the preliminary list.

(Signed) Trivimi VELLISTE
Ambassador
Permanent Representative

* A/50/50.

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ANNEX

Statement issued on 26 March 1995 by the Foreign Ministry of Estonia

On 25 March 1995, the Russian Foreign Ministry issued a statement protesting Estonia's expulsion the previous day of Mr. Pjotr Rozhok, an ultranationalist and anti-Semitic representative of Vladimir Zhirinovsky's Russian Liberal Democratic Party (A/50/131, annex).

The Russian Foreign Ministry statement alleged, among other things, that Mr. Rozhok's expulsion was a "gross violation of the legal rights of Russian citizens living in Estonia" and that Estonian authorities were interested in worsening relations with Russia. The Estonian Foreign Ministry calls attention to the fact that Mr. Rozhok was not expelled from Estonia because he is Russian but because he actively worked against Estonia's constitutional order as well as incited intolerance and ethnic hatred. Expulsion for these reasons is a completely normal procedure that occurs when citizens of other countries do not respect the laws of the country in which they reside. Estonia has been compelled to order citizens of other countries as well to leave Estonia, therefore Mr. Rozhok's expulsion does not constitute a precedent of any kind.

With regard to Mr. Rozhok's anti-Jewish statements, Estonia calls on Russia to work together to combat anti-Semitism. The Ministry welcomes the remarks of Russian Foreign Minister Andrei Kozyrev on 20 March in Paris at the Conference on European Stability, where Mr. Kozyrev said that "nothing is more repugnant than anti-Semitism". The Ministry also recalls Russian President Boris Yeltsin's decree of 23 March ordering a clampdown against the threat of fascism, and political extremism. Both of these actions are parallel with Estonia's own efforts against anti-Semitism.

The Ministry strongly refutes claims that Estonia is seeking to harm bilateral relations with Russia. Since the withdrawal of Russian troops from Estonia on 31 August 1994, Estonia has consciously embarked upon a policy of positive engagement with Russia. Estonia recognizes that both Russia and Estonia face a historic opportunity to improve relations, but notes that such an effort must be mutual, including jointly working against the kind of extremist thinking that Mr. Rozhok represents.

The Ministry draws attention to the fact that Mr. Rozhok has a guaranteed right to contest his expulsion through Estonia's Administrative Court while residing in Russia. The Ministry also notes that Mr. Rozhok was ordered to leave Estonia only after repeated warnings during the last several years to cease his activities. When he refused to do so, Mr. Rozhok was expelled on 24 March under police guard and with the presence of Russian embassy consular personnel, and reached Moscow yesterday.